

INITIAL STUDY & SCOPE OF WORK
BURTON MESA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Project Description

The project is a Land Management Plan for the 5,200 acre Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve in northern Santa Barbara County, California. The property is owned by the State of California, administered by the State Lands Commission, and managed, under a 49-year lease by the California Department of Fish and Game. The Land Management Plan guides management of habitats, species, and programs to achieve the Department's mission to protect and enhance wildlife values. It serves as a guide for appropriate public uses of the property, and provides a descriptive inventory of fish, wildlife and native plant habitats which occur on or use the property. It provides an overview of the property's operation and maintenance, and personnel requirements to implement management goals. It serves as a budget planning aid for annual regional budget preparation. It provides a description of potential and actual environmental impacts and subsequent mitigation which may occur during management, and contains environmental documentation to comply with state and federal statutes and regulations.

The Plan includes a fuel break plan for the 100 foot wide perimeter of the Reserve that is adjacent to the communities of Vandenberg Village, Mesa Oaks, and Mission Hills. The fuelbreak will be a blended mosaic fuelbreak transitioning from sparse vegetative cover of shrubs adjacent to the urban edge, to that of naturally occurring density. The fuel break plan does not include creation of new roads nor does it include vehicular access by fire fighting agencies. The Land Management Plan includes a wildfire response plan. The Plan includes the planned closure of some trails, maintenance of approximately 30 miles of trails, and creation of less than five new trails. It includes plans for boundary fencing, occasional interpretive signs, exclusion of motorized vehicles and equestrian uses, and phasing out farming and livestock grazing. It plans for habitat restoration and protection of pre-historic and historic cultural resources.

	<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>PROJECT IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT*</u>				<u>CUMULATIVE IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT*</u>			
		N	LS	PS -M	PS	N	LS	PS -M	PS
GENERAL:	1. <u>General Plan Environmental Goals and Policies</u>	X				X			
LAND USE:	2. <u>Land Use:</u>								
	A. Community Character	X				X			
	B. Housing	X				X			
	C. Growth Inducement	X				X			
RESOURCES:	3. <u>Air Quality:</u>								
	A. Regional	X				X			
	B. Local	X				X			
	4. <u>Water Resources:</u>								
	A. Groundwater Quantity	X				X			
	B. Groundwater Quality	X				X			
	C. Surface Water Quantity	X				X			
	D. Surface Water Quality	X				X			
	5. <u>Mineral Resources:</u>								
	A. Aggregate	X				X			
	B. Petroleum	X				X			

6. <u>Biological Resources:</u>								
A. Endangered, Threatened, or Rare Species				X				X
B. Wetland Habitat				X				X
C. Coastal Habitat	X				X			
D. Migration Corridors	X				X			
E. Locally Important Species/Communities				X				X
7. <u>Agricultural Resources:</u>								
A. Soils	X				X			
B. Water	X				X			
C. Air Quality/Micro-Climate	X				X			
D. Pests/Diseases	X				X			
E. Land Use Incompatibility	X				X			

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		N	LS	PS -M	PS	N	LS	PS -M	PS
	8. <u>Visual Resources:</u>								
	A. Scenic Highway	X				X			
	B. Scenic Area/Feature	X				X			
	9. <u>Paleontological Resources</u>	X				X			
	10. <u>Cultural Resources:</u>								
	A. Archaeological			X				X	
	B. Historical			X				X	
	C. Ethnic, Social or Religious			X				X	
	11. <u>Energy Resources</u>	X				X			
	12. <u>Coastal Beaches & Sand Dunes</u>	X				X			
HAZARDS:	13. <u>Seismic Hazards:</u>								
	A. Fault Rupture	X				X			
	B. Ground Shaking	X				X			
	C. Tsunami	X				X			
	D. Seiche	X				X			
	E. Liquefaction	X				X			
	14. <u>Geologic Hazards:</u>								
	A. Subsidence:	X				X			
	B. Expansive Soils	X				X			
	C. Landslides/Mudslides	X				X			
	15. <u>Hydraulic Hazards:</u>								
	A. Erosion/Siltation	X				X			
	B. Flooding	X				X			
	16. <u>Aviation Hazards</u>	X				X			
	17. <u>Fire Hazards</u>			X		X			
	18. <u>Hazardous Materials/Waste:</u>								
	A. Above-Ground Hazardous Materials			X		X			
	B. Hazardous Materials	X				X			
	C. Hazardous Waste	X				X			
	19. <u>Noise and Vibration</u>	X				X			
	20. <u>Glare</u>	X				X			
	21. <u>Public Health</u>	X				X			

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		N	LS	PS -M	PS	N	LS	PS -M	PS
PUBLIC FACILITIES/ SERVICES:	22. <u>Transportation/Circulation:</u>								
	A. Public Roads and Highways:								
	(1) Level of Service	X				X			
	(2) Safety/Design	X				X			
	(3) Tactical Access	X				X			
	B. Private Roads and Driveways:								
	(1) Safety/Design	X				X			
	(2) Tactical Access	X				X			
	C. Pedestrian/Bicycle:								
	(1) Public Facilities	X				X			
	(2) Private Facilities	X				X			
	D. Parking	X				X			
	E. Bus Transit	X				X			
	F. Railroads	X				X			
	G. Airports	X				X			
	H. Harbors	X				X			
	I. Pipelines	X				X			
	23. <u>Water Supply:</u>								
	A. Quality	X				X			
	B. Quantity	X				X			
	C. Fire Flow	X				X			
	24. <u>Waste Treatment/Disposal:</u>								
	A. Individual Sewage Disposal System	X				X			
	B. Sewage Collection/Treatment Facilities	X				X			
	C. Solid Waste Management	X				X			
	D. Solid Waste Facilities	X				X			
	25. <u>Utilities:</u>								
	A. Electric	X				X			
	B. Gas	X				X			
	C. Communication	X				X			
	26. <u>Flood Control/Drainage:</u>								
	A. FCD Facility	X				X			
	B. Other Facilities	X				X			

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		N	LS	PS -M	PS	N	LS	PS -M	PS
PUBLIC FACILITIES/ SERVICES (CONT.):	27. <u>Law Enforcement/Emergency Svs.:</u>								
	A. Personnel/Equipment	X				X			
	B. Facilities	X				X			
	28. <u>Fire Protection:</u>								
	A. Distance/Response Time	X				X			
	B. Personnel/Equipment/Facilities/Access	X				X			
	29. <u>Education:</u>								
	A. Schools	X				X			
	B. Libraries	X				X			
	30. <u>Recreation:</u>								
	A. Local Parks/Facilities	X				X			
	B. Regional Parks/Facilities	X				X			
	C. Regional Trails/Corridors	X				X			

DEGREE OF EFFECT:

N = No Impact.

LS = Less Than Significant

PS-M = Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.

PS = Potentially Significant Impact.

DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST

1. **Goals and Policies:** These will be discussed in EIR.
2. **Land Use:** The Land Management Plan (LMP) will not change the character of the community, cause a need for more housing, or induce growth.
3. **Air Quality:** Management of the Reserve will include one or up to a maximum of 6 staff with vehicles to patrol and perform maintenance activities, but emissions will not have a significant impact on local or regional air quality. Prescribed burns of the vegetation are not proposed. Wildfires are anticipated and will have short-term effects on local air quality.
4. **Water Resources:** The LMP will not affect the quality of groundwater or surface water. Some groundwater may be needed for habitat restoration efforts, but the effect of these short term projects are not expected to be significant.
5. **Mineral Resources:** The LMP will have no effect on aggregate or petroleum resources. The oil company owning the oil field to the north of the BMER will continue to have access to all of their facilities.
6. **Biological Resources:** The Fuel Management Plan component of the LMP may have significant adverse impacts to Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Species, Wetlands and Locally Important Species and Communities. These will be discussed in the EIR.
7. **Agricultural Resources:** The LMP will phase out farming and grazing on approximately 500 acres and restore them to native habitats. No significant effect will result.
8. **Visual Resources:** Public views from Highway 1 and other public roads will be maintained. No impacts to visual resources will occur.
9. **Paleontological Resources:** No paleontological resources are known from the Reserve.
10. **Cultural Resources:** The LMP could significantly impact cultural resources. This will be discussed in the EIR.
11. **Energy Resources:** The LMP will not require a significant consumption of energy.
12. **Coastal Beaches and Sand Dunes:** The BMER is not on the coast and the LMP is not expected to affect sand supply at coastal beaches and sand dunes.
13. **Seismic Hazards:** No structures or uses are proposed that would be significantly affected by seismic hazards.
14. **Geologic Hazards:** No subsidence, expansive soils, landslides, or mudslides are anticipated.
15. **Hydraulic Hazards:** Erosion on steep slopes with sandy soils could adversely affect trail users. This will be discussed in the EIR.
16. **Aviation Hazards:** No aviation hazards will occur as a result of the LMP.
17. **Fire Hazards:** Fire hazards will occur with or without the LMP. This will be discussed in the EIR.
18. **Hazardous Materials/Waste:** Hikers on trails near the Point Pedernales Pipeline could be affected if there were a gas leak. This will be discussed in the EIR.
19. **Noise and Vibration:** Short-term noise will occur during chipping of cut fuels as part of the fuelbreak project. This will be discussed in the EIR.
20. **Glare:** There will be no lighting or glare as part of the project.
21. **Public Health:** No public health issues will be affected by the LMP.
22. **Transportation/Circulation:** Use of the BMER will not cause a significant increase in traffic or levels of service or safety design issues on the highway and roads through the Reserve. There will be no increase in parking demand or other related facilities.
23. **Water Supply:** The habitat restoration efforts will result in an insignificant amount of water demand, and will not affect the quality or quantity of water supply to residential areas.
24. **Waste Treatment/Disposal:** Public restrooms are not proposed. There will be no impact on local sewage and solid waste services.
25. **Utilities:** No new demand for electric, gas, or telephone is expected. Existing utilities with maintenance needs on the BMER will be required to work more actively with CDFG, but this is not expected to significantly affect their operations or ability to provide services.
26. **Flood Control/Drainage:** The project would not cause demand for new flood control or drainage facilities. The LMP calls for working with the County and local residents to reduce sedimentation in drainages, but this is expected to have a beneficial affect on flood control facilities.
27. **Law Enforcement:** Existing level of demand for law enforcement by County Sheriff is expected to stay the same.
28. **Fire Protection:** The LMP will not change the response time to local residences and will not cause an increase in personnel, equipment or facilities. The LMP is expected to improve the safety of adjacent residences to the BMER through implementation of the fuelbreak. This will be discussed in the EIR.
29. **Education:** The LMP will not increase demand for schools or libraries, but it will provide educational opportunities. This is considered a beneficial impact.

30. Recreation: The BMER will continue to provide non-motorized recreation on designated trails as long as this use is consistent with protection of ecological resources. Implementation of the Trails Plan of the LMP will close some trails, but the net effect will still result in more than 30 miles of publicly accessible trails. The LMP will continue prohibiting motorized access, including OHVs and ORVs, pursuant to Title 14 regulations already adopted by the Fish and Game Commission. This will be discussed in the EIR.

<u>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>		<u>YES/MAYBE</u>	<u>NO</u>
Based on the information contained within Sections B and C:			
1.	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	X	
2.	Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals? (A short-term impact on the environment is one that occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future).		X
3.	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effect of other current projects, and the effect of probable future projects. (Several projects may have relatively small individual impacts on two or more resources, but the total of those impacts on the environment is significant).	X	
4.	Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		X

<u>DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT</u>	
On the basis of this initial evaluation:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measure(s) described in section C of the Initial Study will be applied to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project, individually and/or cumulatively, MAY have a significant effect on the environment and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.*
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Date _____

Felix Arteaga, Chief
Lands and Facilities Branch
California Department of Fish and Game